

# News from Ed Markey

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## EXPERT PANEL TO ASSESS ADVERSE HEALTH EFFECTS OF POWERFUL AMUSEMENT PARK RIDES

**Reps. Markey, Pascrell ask Brain Injury Association of America to  
examine need for g-force limits to protect against brain trauma**

WASHINGTON, D.C. --

: Reps. Edward J. Markey (D-MA) and Bill Pascrell Jr. (D-NJ) sent a letter signed by 11 House members and 1 Senator to the Brain Injury Association of America enlisting the organization in an investigation of a recent spate of brain injury reports associated with roller coasters and other amusement park rides which are suspected of having such powerful "g-forces" designed into the rides that park patrons are injured, sometimes fatally, even when the rides operate as intended and no accident occurs. Both the National Institute of Neurological Disease and Strokes (NINDS) and the Annals of Emergency Medicine have recently documented a startling increase in brain trauma cases associated with amusement park rides where the rider did nothing wrong, the operator did nothing wrong, the machinery operated without error, and yet the rider suffered very serious brain trauma.

"This could be an extremely serious problem," said Markey. "For the last decade, we have seen each new ride experiment with higher speeds and more exotic reversals and loops, resulting in new and possibly harmful forces imposed on the bodies of riders, many of whom are children. The industry has so far failed to answer the question 'how much is too much?' We are asking this expert panel to determine what is safe before the industry's engineering excesses cause more risk for roller coaster riders."

"When evidence is put forth showing brain injury trauma cases on the rise even when a ride is operated correctly, a thorough safety review is appropriate," said Pascrell, co-founder of the House Brain Injury Task Force. "We need to examine this and ensure riders of all ages are not endangering themselves through rides that use excessive force."

In addition to Reps. Markey and Pascrell, signatories of the letter include Senator Robert Torricelli (D-NJ) and Reps. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), Mike Thompson (D-CA), Steve Rothman (D-NJ), Ronnie Shows (D-MS), Donald Payne (D-NJ), Maurice Hinchey (D-NY), Frank Pallone, Jr., (D-NJ) Mike Capuano (D-MA) and Louise Slaughter (D-NY.)

The Association has agreed to set up a "blue ribbon panel" of neurologists and other relevant experts to assess the situation and provide guidance concerning what is safe and healthy when it comes to g-forces on roller coasters. They are expected to review cases from the medical literature, cases that have come to light through press reports or private communications, and expert opinion regarding g-force limits. Their work is also expected to be informed by the State of New Jersey and the European Union, which are expected to move forward with mandatory regulations in the absence of voluntary action by the industry.

A copy of the letter, with attachments, is available at [http://www.house.gov/markey/iss\\_parkrides.htm](http://www.house.gov/markey/iss_parkrides.htm)

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